642 Yüan refused to budge from his base of power in Peking. The provisional assembly, intent on exercising the real power in the government, reluctantly moved to Peking to limit the actions of the new and distrusted president. At his own base of power, however, Yüan was invulnerable. When the parliament refused to bend to his will, he brought about the dissolution of the body in 1913 and its permanent suspension at the beginning of 1914.

Thereafter, he restored Confucianism and the worship of heaven as state cults, established peace and order by strong-arm methods, and consolidated his personal power. Having become president for life in 1914, he attempted to make himself emperor. This move led to the defection of six provinces south of the Yangtze River and their organization of a rival government. Yüan was in the midst of trying to undo his folly when he died in June 1916.

F. Warlord Rule

642 With Yüan's death, his staff officers in
701 North China and military leaders elsewhere
681 made a bid for dominance over all or parts of China. Motivated largely by the desire for power and wealth, none attracted a popular following or was able to restore unity and centralized government to China.[20]

20. On the warlords see MacNair, op. cit., pp. 46-64 and passim.